



Rutland County Council

Transport for children who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) FAQ's

This document aims to provide additional information for parents/carers of students with SEND by addressing the most frequently asked questions. Full details of entitlement and provision can be found in the SEND transport policy on our website www.rutland.gov.uk/my-community/transport/school-and-college-transport/home-to-school-transport

Q. My child has an EHCP, does this automatically mean he/she is entitled to free transport?

A. No, having an EHCP does not grant an automatic entitlement to free transport. The eligibility criteria within the SEND transport policy must be met, although, special circumstances and individual needs will be assessed and taken into consideration.

Q. We have been told that we are entitled to free transport, will this be a taxi that picks up from our home?

A. The journey requirements and the needs/abilities of each child are taken into consideration when allocating suitable transport. Transport may require a home pick-up or a pick-up point within reasonable walking distance may be allocated. The following options are considered:

- Free pass for use on public transport
- Independent Travel Training
- Free seat on a closed school bus route
- Free seat on a new or existing minibus route
- Free seat on a shared taxi route
- Free seat on a lone taxi
- Personal Travel Budget

Q. We have chosen a different school for our child than the one advised by the council as the nearest suitable school. Will we receive free transport or transport assistance?

A. No. This decision qualifies as parental choice and students will only be considered for transport provision if they attend the nearest suitable school that can cater for need. Parents/carers who choose to place their child in a school which is not the nearest suitable school will normally undertake to make their own travel arrangements and bear any costs incurred.

Q. We live under 2 miles from school but my child is unable to walk there, even when accompanied. Will free transport be provided?

A. Where the distance from home to school is less than 2 miles (for children under 8 years) and/or when a child has no EHC plan, then travel assistance will be considered, whilst taking into account individual circumstances that may prevent them getting to school. Parents/carers should apply for transport in the usual way in order for individual circumstances to be considered.

Q. Why can't our transport arrangements stay the same every year?

A. The council must adhere to the correct and fair procurement processes which means that contracts must be re-tendered at the correct times and the successful operator awarded a contract may be different to the previous operator.

The provision of transport will be regularly reviewed:

- By the school, parents and SEN team during the annual review of the students plan. A member of the transport operations team will also attend if invited to.
- By the Transport Operations team when determining the most cost effective arrangements.
- In response to any reports of inappropriate conduct by students, or upon the conclusion of a Risk Assessment.

Q. What will the Council do to help our family adapt to transport changes?

A. The Council understands that changes to transport can be difficult to deal with and therefore will offer as much contact with new transport staff as is required for students and their families. These arrangements would be dealt with on an individual basis and may include:

- Telephone calls
- Home visits
- School visits
- Trips out in the vehicle to be used out of school time
- Photos and names of transport staff to keep at home

Q. I want to drive my child to their school placement, can I claim a personal travel budget to cover my costs?

A. If you are entitled to free transport, a personal travel budget may be available as long as suitable transport is not already available (bus, minibus or taxi). Contact the Transport Operations team to discuss your request.

Q. If my child wants to go to a friends' house after school or needs to go the dentist, can the transport provided by the Authority be changed to cater for these journeys?

A. No. The Authority's duties relate to transport between home and school. Therefore, Rutland County Council will not normally provide transport for:

- educational visits as it is expected that schools will consider transport needs when planning trips to facilitate the inclusion of all students
- students to attend swimming sessions
- students to attend breakfast or after school clubs
- students to attend work experience
- students to attend differing establishments during the school day
- students to attend interviews and open days in preparation for Post-16 college provision
- students to attend medical or dental appointments
- students to attend open days, school plays or other social events
- parents to attend annual review meetings

Q. Will my child be looked after in transit by a passenger assistant?

A. The requirement for a passenger assistant is assessed on a case by case basis and is reviewed annually. A passenger assistant is only required where a student will require assistance or close monitoring when travelling due to behavioural and/or medical needs.

Q. My child takes medication, will this be administered by the transport staff?

A. No. Transport staff should be made aware of any medications being taken by passengers and any possible side effects but are not authorised to administer any medication.

Q Do transport staff walk children into school?

A Yes. Parents/carers are required to walk their children to and from the transport daily and transport staff will then escort and collect students from reception at school/college.

Q What happens if a driver or passenger assistant is off work?

A A replacement will be sought for temporary cover. All drivers and passenger assistant employed by or contracted by Rutland Council are subject to an enhanced adult & child DBS check. In short notice sickness situations, every attempt will be made by the Transport Operations team to forewarn of a change of transport staff where possible. Although every attempt is made to keep staff changes to a minimum, there will always be occasions where health and/or personal issues of staff will lead to absence.

Q Will there be other students/young people sharing the same transport with my child/ren?

A Wherever this is possible, the Authority will combine students onto shared transport. Route requirements and student needs are all taken into consideration when planning the home to school transport contracts each year. Lone transport routes are sometimes required where very complex needs are involved and/or the home addresses and/or destinations do not fit with other transport requirements.

Q When and how can we request Independent Travel Training?

A At any time but contacting either the SEN team or the Transport Operations team. Travel training is a very effective way of:

- Preparing a child for adulthood by encouraging independent travel
- Supporting the public transport network in the county
- By reducing costs of dedicated home to school transport contracts

Q What does travel training involved?

A The Transport Operations team will work with each family to create a travel plan dependent on requirement and need. The plan may include some or all of the following:

- Safe walking routes & skills
- Travel on school bus
- Travel on public bus services
- Train travel
- Handling money
- Public transport timetable reading
- Planning routes
- Asking for help – how and where

Q What happens when my child moves onto Post-16?

A In certain circumstances students aged between 16 and 18 years, who were, at the time of leaving school, in receipt of special transport arrangements between home and school on account of their special educational needs, **may** be entitled to support to attend a further education college. During the annual review of the EHC plan in year 11, continued support and requirements for transport should be discussed with the SEN team.

Q What do we need to do as parents/carers?

A Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. The Authority will provide parents with written information about transport arrangements.

Parents/carers must not make any changes to transport without contacting the transport team at Rutland Council for authorisation.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring that their child is ready on time each morning, that the child joins the vehicle safely, that they encourage the child to behave responsibly and that they make arrangements for the child to be received by a responsible adult on their return home or the pick up point.

Parents/carers should notify the SEN team of any changes to the pupil's name, address, contact details or any other circumstances which could impact on the provision of transport.

For many parents and carers, particularly those of pupils attending school a long way from home, the contact with the driver and passenger assistant will represent the most regular contact with school. Parents and carers will not normally be permitted to travel on the vehicle with their child, but may ask the Passenger Assistant to pass messages between home and school.

Rutland County Council Transport Operations team –
transport@rutland.gov.uk

Rutland County Council SEN team – SEND@rutland.gov.uk